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THE NEGRO: The Southerner's Problem. By Thomas Nelson Page. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, November, 1904. Pp. xii, 315.

In his latest book Mr. Page's views upon the Negro are delivered with all the grace characteristic of his previous writings; but in a book on so serious a subject we shall not dwell upon literary style, but, as seems more fit, upon the author's point of view and his main arguments deduced from observation and statistics.

First, as to point of view, the spirit in which Mr. Page has penned his preface is such as to disarm hostile criticism, and to lead the reviewer to emulate the author's endeavor to be "plain, candid, and as far as possible, temperate," to "tell the truth absolutely as he sees it," and thus "do his part to help others find it." The sincerity of the author's desire cannot be questioned, but whether he has given a candid and impartial statement of the case let the reader judge.

Mr. Page endeavors to show (1) that the Negro Problem is the *Southerner's* problem, and does not concern the North; (2) that a race can be judged fairly by its rank and file plus its criminals and paupers, but minus its genius and virtue; (3) that the Negro is essentially inferior; has always been a slave and always will be; that he is not improvable and has accomplished nothing noteworthy. Let us consider these points separately.

1. Mr. Page's title claims the Negro problem as "the Southerner's Problem," but in view of the fact (cited in the early chapters) that both North and South were instrumental in bringing Negro slaves to America, and that North as well as South has helped to create the present situation, we hold the question to be a national one. Further, "it is a national problem in the sense that North and South are parties in interest," says Dr. Felix Adler, "and that being the case, it is, of course, our right as well as our duty to be heard; for whatever is done in the South is going to affect us in the North; if the solution is right it will help us; if wrong it will hurt us—more than that, it will hurt the Republic." Must we not agree that both North and South as parties in interest must contribute to the solution of the problem? Is it not true that all Americans, black as well as white, must contribute labor and insight, thought and devotion, to the solution? Who, save General Armstrong himself, has done more towards its peaceful solution than the man who is known through-

out the civilized world as "the Negro Moses"? There can be little doubt that the intelligent men among the Negroes themselves will do incalculably more than any other class or race toward the solution of the problem. For these reasons we hold that the problem is *not* for the *Southern white man* alone, but for the Northern white man also, and for the Negro American, North and South. The question, "What shall we (Southern white men) do with the Negro?" should be changed to "What can the Negro be encouraged by both North and South to accomplish through his own efforts?" It is a national problem, not the Southerner's alone.

2. Again, Mr. Page entitles his book "The Negro," but explicitly states that "when the writer speaks of the Negroes he desires generally to be understood as referring to the great body of the race, and not as including what may be termed the upper fraction—that is, those who, by reason of intellect, education and character, form so clearly an exception that they must be considered as a separate class" (page 62), and in the preface: "In characterizing the Negroes generally, it is not meant to include the respectable element among them, except where this is plainly intended." We may be mistaken, but we believe that no American or Englishman would agree that any book upon the Anglo-Saxon which should omit Shakespeare, Browning, Emerson, Gladstone, Washington, Lincoln (and the rest who go to make up the Anglo-Saxon "upper fraction") and should judge us by our clerks, farmers, grocerymen, and our criminals could lay claim to be entitled "The Anglo-Saxon." In other words we hold that a race, like an individual, must be judged by all its fruits. In any fair judgment of a man's character his virtues must appear. We should object to having our character or our literature judged with the best excluded, but Mr. Page elects to judge the Negro race without considering Frederick Douglass, Booker Washington, Professor DuBois, or the other leading men.

3. Mr. Page holds that the Negro is essentially inferior; that he has always been a slave or menial and always will be. He argues at length to this effect (page 248, *et seq.*): "The earliest human records . . . the monuments of Egypt show him as a slave bearing burdens; after tens of centuries he is still a menial. Four thousand years have not served to whiten the pigments of the frame nor developed the force of the intellect. The leopard cannot change his spots to-day nor the Ethiopian his skin, any

more than in the days of Jeremiah. *It is not argued that because the Negro is a Negro he is incapable of any intellectual development.* On the contrary under certain conditions of intellectual environment, careful training, sympathetic encouragement from the stronger races, he may individually attain a fair degree of mental development. . . . Where the Negro has thriven it has invariably been under the influence and by the assistance of the stronger races. Where these have been wanting, whatever other conditions have existed, he has invariably reverted toward the original (barbaric) type. Civilization has swept triumphant over a large part of the earth; only in Negro-Africa has barbarism held unbroken rule and savagery maintained perpetual domain. No faintest gleam has ever pierced the impenetrable gloom of the 'Dark Continent.' . . . But suppose that other observers may have found a well-to-do doctor or lawyer . . . it only proves that in individual instances they may rise to a fair level; it simply emphasises the fact that these are exceptions and does not in the least affect the argument, which is, *that the Negroes, as a race, have never exhibited much capacity to advance, that as a race they are inferior to other races.*"

The argument is that the Negro, because he belongs to the Negro race, does not advance, which is a direct contradiction of the statement quoted above that "it is not argued that the Negro because he is a Negro is incapable of intellectual development." Many other citations might be made of statements which similarly cannot bear analysis, but to give one only,—a particularly glaring self-contradiction, because the two statements occur within eight lines of each other,—on page 54 Mr. Page says, "A visit to the South will show any one that *in the main* the feeling of kindness and good will (existing between the Southern whites and their former slaves) has survived all the haranguing of the politician and all the teaching of the doctrinaire." Eight lines down he says, "*The rule is a changed relation and a widening breach.*" (Italics ours.) Such contradictions would discredit the arguments of any writer, North or South.

Moreover, the main contentions of the above passage are not borne out by the facts: the Negro, without assistance, does not "invariably revert" to barbarism, nor has barbarism and savagery held unbroken sway in Negro-Africa. Mr. Page cannot have heard of the interesting work of distinguished German and other ethnologists who have devoted several years to the investigation

of Negro race-history in Africa, with most encouraging results. Dr. Franz Boas, the distinguished ethnologist of the New York Museum of Natural History, is authority for the statement that "The Negro all over the African continent is either a tiller of the soil or the owner of large herds. . . . Arts and industries have developed to a great extent. . . . We may safely say, that at a time when our own ancestors still used stone implements or at best when bronze weapons were first introduced, the Negro had developed the art of smelting iron; it seems likely that their race has contributed more than any other to the early development of the iron industry. . . . The legal trend of mind of the people deserves especial mention. . . . Local trade is highly developed in all parts of Africa. . . . A relatively high degree of culture has been attained throughout the Sudan where the true Negro, the ancestor of our slave population, has achieved the very advances which the critics of the Negro would have us believe he cannot attain. He has a highly developed agriculture, and the industries connected with his daily life are complex and artistic. His power of organization has been such that for centuries large empires have existed which have proved their stability in wars with their neighbors, and which have left their records in the chronicles. . . . Barth, the discoverer of the chronicles, who knew the Sudanese Negro through long and intimate intercourse, says, "King Askia, perhaps the greatest sovereign that ever ruled over Negroland, was a native of the country. The dynasty of the Askia was entirely of native descent. . . . It is of no small interest to a person who endeavors to take a comprehensive view of the various races of mankind, to observe how a Negro king in the interior of the continent not only extended his conquests far and wide, but also governed his subjects with justice and equity, causing well-being and comfort to spring up everywhere within the borders of his extensive dominions, and introducing such of the institutions of Mohammedan civilization as he considered might be useful to his subjects." Finally Dr. Boas concludes that, "The achievements of the Negro in Africa justify us in maintaining that the race is capable of social and political achievements; that it will produce here, as it has done in Africa, its great men; and that it will contribute its part to the welfare of the community."

This should convince Mr. Page that his statements about reversion to barbarism and about the unbroken savagery of the Dark Continent are based on insufficient information, as is also his

declaration that "nothing of value to the human race" has yet been produced—in art, in mechanical development, in literature, in science—by the Negro mind, or he perhaps forgets the paintings by Tanner, which have been exhibited "on the line" in Parisian galleries, the poems and charming southern stories of Paul Dunbar, the "lyric prose" of Professor DuBois, the writings of Alexandre Dumas, the patent brake device of a Negro which is in present use on the elevated roads of New York—one of numerous inventions by the same man—or the personal power and eloquence, the educational and administrative achievement of Mr. Booker Washington, just to mention a few things which come at once to mind. Also we think most people will agree with us in thinking that building, carpentry and similar skilled work is produced at least partly by mind and it is assuredly of value to the human race.

In view of these facts we must conclude that Mr. Page fails to live up to the aspirations of his preface. We do not doubt his wish to deal candidly with his subject, but we are forced to the conclusion that he lacks the unbiased mind which would enable him to do so. His statements are too sweeping and are not supported in all cases by the actual facts, as has, we believe, been shown. All this does not make Mr. Page's stories less delightful, but there can be no question that it completely discredits his book on "The Negro" and rules it out of the class of books which can be considered to contribute anything of value to the discussion of the Negro Problem.

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NEW YORK CITY.

THE UNITED STATES AND PORTO RICO: With Special Reference to the Problems arising out of our Contact with the Spanish-American Civilization. By L. S. Rowe, Ph. D., Professor of Political Science in the University of Pennsylvania. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1904. Pp. 271.

There can be no question as to the honesty of the intention of the "Administration" and of the American people at large so to govern the dependent territories derived from Spain, as best to subserve the interests of their respective populations. Any benefit that this country is to receive from their possession, whether by way of increased commerce and new fields for the employment of capital, or by enhanced prestige in world politics,